

## Sotheby's

Sotheby Parke Bernet &amp; Co.

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Telex: 244510 Sotheby, London W1A 2AA, England. 01-433 8800  
Fax: 01-433 8800, Telex: 244510 Sotheby, London W1A 2AA, England.Monday 2nd June  
and following days at 10.30 am  
at New Bond Street**The Collection of Autograph  
Letters, Historical Documents  
and Signed Photographs formed  
between 1930-1979 by the late  
R. E. D. Rawlins Esq.**

Catalogue 15

Thursday 5th June  
and following day at 1 pm  
at 115 Chancery Lane**Children's Books, Juvenilia  
and Related Drawings**Including: Comtesse d'Aulnay's *Les Contes  
de la Petite*, 2 vols. in one, Freytag's  
1883; 11. Lamotte's *Klein  
Zurich*, 1820; 12. *The Night, or  
the only edition of the first edition; A  
Prison for a Little Boy*, first edition, 1798;  
June and Ann Taylor's *Rhymes for the Nursery*,  
first edition, 1806; and *The Toy Shop, or  
Sentimental Precursor* (c. 1795).The Children's Library, 3 vols., including the  
first English edition of *Pinnocchio*, 1802; pre-  
sentation copies of Lewis Carroll's *The Hunting  
of the Snark*, 1876, and *Alice's Adventures  
Underground*, 1868; Scholastic and Layard's  
*Kate Greenaway*, 1905, with a drawing by the  
artist; a collection of Lang's *Fairy Books*,  
11 vols., 1889-1910; Lear's *Book of Nonsense*,  
second edition, 1825, and first complete edition,  
1852; Mitton's *Now We Are Six*, limited to  
230 copies, 1927; Andersen's *Fairy Tales*, 1921  
and the Grimm's *Fleur-de-Neige*, Paris, 1929,  
both illustrated by Kay Nielsen; Beatrix Pot-  
ter's *Washday*, limited to 100 copies, 1944;  
Shakespeare's *A Midsummer Night's Dream*, 1912,  
with a drawing by Rackham; W. Heath Robin-  
son's *Uncle Lizzie*, 1902; Stevenson's *Treasure  
Island*, 1881; Tolkien's *The Hobbit*, 1937, and  
a collection of Jules Verne's *Voyages Extra-  
ordinaires*, Paris (1876-84). *Middlebury Books*,  
including *The Whole Book of Psalms in Meter*  
(1873), *The Cabinet of Lilliput*, 12 vols. in one,  
1802, and *The Infant's Library*, 16 vols. in one,  
1801; *Pennycuik and Co.*; *Pick Books*,  
moving picture books by Alexander and  
others; *Panorama*; *Peepshows*, including 10  
by Ernst Haeckel in original wooden viewing  
box; *Playing Cards*, including a Popple Plot  
deck and a *Transformation* deck by Oliver  
Drawings and watercolours by Edward Bawden,  
Rene Bull, Caldecott, H. J. Ford, Kate Green-  
away, Harold Jones, Beatrix Potter, Rackham,  
Charles Robinson, J. A. Shepherd, Mary  
Tourtel, and others.

Catalogue 15

Monday 9th June  
at 10.30 am  
at New Bond Street**Valuable Printed Books**including Continental books of the 15th to  
18th century, including a volume of four works,  
from the library of Gabriel Harvey, and with  
his signature or annotations; English literature  
of the 16th to the 19th century, including  
Alfred's *Witt's theatre of the little world*, 1599,  
and the pseudo-Shakespeare *Life of Sir John  
Oldcastle*, 1619. Books on travel and topog-  
raphy, including Saint-Nor's *Description des  
Royaumes de Naples et de Sicile*, 1781-86, Zur-  
lauben and Lahorde's *Tableaux topographiques  
de la Suisse*, 1780-86, Chénier-Guiffier's  
*Journal pittoresque de la Suisse*, 1783-1823,  
Fogues's *Oriental memoirs*, 1813, the dedication  
copy to Sir Charles Malet, Bt.; colour-plate  
books, including Bury's *Coloured Views on the  
Liverpool and Manchester railways*, 1832, and  
McKenney and Hall's *History of the Indian  
tribes of North America*, 1838-44. Books on  
natural history, including Audubon's *Histoire  
naturelle des oiseaux et des mœurs* (1810), Elliot's  
*A monograph of the pitidae*, 1893-95, Galle's  
*Pomona Italiana*, 1817-29, Gould's *The Birds  
of Australia*, 1848-59, *The Birds of Asia*, 1850-  
63, a monograph of the *Trochilidae*, or family  
of hummingbirds, 1861-87, and other works.  
Gould and Bouvier's *The Birds of New  
Guinea*, 1875-88, Redouté's *Les Illustres*, 1802-  
16, and Smith's *Illustrations of the Zoology of  
South Africa*, 1833-48. Books relating to the  
history of science, including an interesting  
astronomical manuscript, 17th c., 1591,  
Babe's *Astronomie instructive*, 1699, and  
1610, and other works. Buckhardt's  
*Epistola ad . . . Lellinium*, 1750, Campan-  
ari's *De sensu rerum*, 1620, a proof copy,  
Gott d'Arzschmidt's, 1565, Mercator's *Cosmo-  
graphica tabula mathematica*, 1644, Purkinje's  
*De cellulis nervorum fibrillis*, 1830, Vibius  
Siquet's *Libri de funibus*, 1305, and  
books by Annius, Boyle, Fusch, Gallini, Cal-  
vini, Hugi, Kepler, Kircher, Nazari, Newton,  
Pascal, Rho (or Ro), Rubellus, Stelluti, Torri-  
celli, Volta, Weidenfeld and other writers dis-  
tinguished in this field of study.

Catalogue 15

Monday 16th June  
and following day at 11 am  
at New Bond Street**Printed Books**relating to the history of science, medicine and  
natural history, and others illustrative of the  
fine arts, travel and topography, with a selec-  
tion of continental books of the 16th to the  
18th century.

Catalogue 15

## BOOKS &amp; PRINTS

Don't miss these PBFA JUNE  
BOOK FAIRS.

LONDON—Imperial Hotel, Russell Square June 9, 10-11, 12, 13, 14, 15, 16, 17, 18, 19, 20, 21, 22, 23, 24, 25, 26, 27, 28, 29, 30, 31, July 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8, 9, 10, 11, 12, 13, 14, 15, 16, 17, 18, 19, 20, 21, 22, 23, 24, 25, 26, 27, 28, 29, 30, 31, August 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8, 9, 10, 11, 12, 13, 14, 15, 16, 17, 18, 19, 20, 21, 22, 23, 24, 25, 26, 27, 28, 29, 30, 31, September 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8, 9, 10, 11, 12, 13, 14, 15, 16, 17, 18, 19, 20, 21, 22, 23, 24, 25, 26, 27, 28, 29, 30, 31, October 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8, 9, 10, 11, 12, 13, 14, 15, 16, 17, 18, 19, 20, 21, 22, 23, 24, 25, 26, 27, 28, 29, 30, 31, November 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8, 9, 10, 11, 12, 13, 14, 15, 16, 17, 18, 19, 20, 21, 22, 23, 24, 25, 26, 27, 28, 29, 30, 31, December 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8, 9, 10, 11, 12, 13, 14, 15, 16, 17, 18, 19, 20, 21, 22, 23, 24, 25, 26, 27, 28, 29, 30, 31, January 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8, 9, 10, 11, 12, 13, 14, 15, 16, 17, 18, 19, 20, 21, 22, 23, 24, 25, 26, 27, 28, 29, 30, 31, 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October 1917

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MARC FERRO

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## THE TIMES LITERARY SUPPLEMENT

6 JUNE 1980

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FRANCE

## From decadence to destruction

By Eugen Weber

PIERRE ANDREU and FREDERIC GROVER:  
Drieu la Rochelle  
587pp. Paris: Hachette.

DOMINIQUE DESANTI:  
Drieu la Rochelle ou le séducteur mystifié  
476pp. Paris: Flammarion.

ROBERT SOUCY:  
Fascist Intellectual: Drieu la Rochelle  
451pp. University of California Press, £15.05/20 03463 5

PIERRE DU BOIS:  
Drieu la Rochelle  
Une vie  
357pp. Lausanne: Cahiers d'histoire contemporaine.

JEAN LANSARD:  
La Création littéraire chez Drieu la Rochelle à travers son oeuvre théâtrale  
These présentée à l'Université de Paris, Sorbonne, 1979.

Pierre Drieu la Rochelle was born in Paris in 1898. He died there in 1945, finally committing suicide after much talk about it and two unsuccessful attempts. He had led a full life: failed *Sciences Po*; succeeded as a warrior; did only success that he recognized; spent some years as a fellow-traveller of the surrealists; wrote about dirty books or pamphlets, and six (or seven) plays—three of them actually produced, with no great success; made love to innumerable women, two of whom he married; and took an active interest in politics, in which he illustrated himself, as he did in letters, as an increasingly aging young man of great promise. He was also one of the chief literary representatives of fascist arguments and, later, of collaboration with the Germans, whose army he had dreamt of joining before 1914, and whose friendship he had sought for France since then.

As the literary worth of Drieu's writings is, to say the least, debatable, and since his forays into politics never succeeded, it seems odd that this *rate immortal* (Mauriac dixit) should rate so much attention. Yet the record of the past three decades belies the purgatory of Drieu's reputation. A bibliographical review reveals a spate of books, articles, dissertations and special journal issues devoted to him, beginning with Pierre Andreu's *Drieu, témoin et visionnaire*, published in 1952. Frederic Grover, another rivalist, published his first study of Drieu in 1958 with the University of California Press, which reaffirms its interest with the recent publication of Robert Soucy's public

persona whose private aspects had been displayed before a wider public by Louis Malle's film, *Le feu follet*.

Such sustained interest may be attributed to renewed scrutiny of fascism, the resurgence of collaborationists who had lain low for a decade or two, the fading of old rankings, and the readmission of other once-excluded authors to the canon. It can be ascribed to the sympathies Drieu evoked and never lost among many women, including both his former wives, and men—like Jacques Lucan, who wrote his doctoral dissertation in Drieu's apartment; Gaston Gallimard, whose NRF he rescued in 1940; Jean Paulhan, whom he saved from the Gestapo in 1941; and André Malraux, to whose second son he stood godfather in 1943. Even Gaston Berger, whom he raked over the coals in *Gilles*, continued to remember him as an incomparable friend, a creature of delicacy, seductiveness and moral elegance.

The Drieu vogue may be charged to the sympathy many can feel for a weak, aspirational talent afflicted by high aspirations, disarmingly ruthless self-criticism, discouragingly helpless in coming to his faults: the *semblable* and *frère* of many contemporary intellectuals. Or explained by the treasury of references on which students of twentieth-century French society can draw: not only in his writings, wrong-headed, naive political chronicles but above all in his most lucid novels: *Revue bourgeoise* (1937) and *Gilles* (1939).

"I feel like telling a story," begins Drieu's first real book, *Etat Civil* (1931). "Will I ever tell anything but my story? He never did. But in the many versions of his autobiography, lived or imaginary, he left us the chronicle of a certain middle class, drained and slightly grubby, victims of good cooking and of poor hygiene, too timid for their needs, too clumsy for their ambitions, settling like Gilles for what they didn't want rather than for nothing at all. And a lively account of that national fascination with *paroles verbales* which Gilles's adopted father puts in a nutshell: 'One can say anything but the truth, it's of no consequence, one is saying nothing.' Key to Gilles's (and Drieu's) desperate attempts to attain responsibility and great consequences from indifferent fate. Like his creator, like the *Le Penseur* of *Revue bourgeoise*, Gilles is a failure. 'Délitieux les ratés, ce sont eux qui peuplent la vie' remarks Geneviève Le Penseur in passing. Spoilt, flabby, full of what the French call *complications*: lack of directness or simplicity. He sees this in others, crying his sense of loss in idioms he despises but which he cannot shed.

No student of the French bourgeoisie between the wars, or of the intelligentsia, should dismiss these books before a careful reading, however uncomfortable the experience. But there is another reason to read Drieu today. He is one of the most eloquent of those who, in his time, reacted to the declining sense of decadence — of his own kind, of France, of Europe. In 1911, already, as a student at *Sciences Po*, he could not stand the "canting attitude" that made his fellow-French regard themselves as victims of history rather than of themselves. Ten years later, the aftermath of the dragged-out butchery in which he had several times been wounded drove him to criticism that became sharper, more bitter, as he watched France, and her neighbours too, drift like a bloated carcass down-river to catastrophe.

He began by impugning the obvious: the falling birthrate, the faltering family, immorality,

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Drieu la Rochelle

divorce, corruption. He talked to Clemenceau who told him that all he had done had been done in vain, in twenty years France would be dead. He ruled Soviet Russia's taking America for a model, when it should instead drown Europe "under an irresistible flow of love, of violence, of barbarism" (*Mesure de la France*, 1932). He dreamt, as he had done in his first book of poems (*Interrogation*, 1917) — the best he ever wrote, which isn't saying much — of breaking up old structures, ministries, barracks, banks, rejecting political parties, jettisoning Tradition and Revolution both.

He admired Mussolini, who proved that "one could bowl over a parliament of noodles". He ran with the surrealists and toyed with the *Action française*. He was an anarchy in search of a discipline, as Marcel Aymé described him.

"One crushing fact" haunted him: decadence. A protest process which he and Emmanuel Berl traced to the death of bourgeois morality, and of thought, when, in 1927, they founded the ominously titled *Les Nouveaux Jours*. Drieu's first editorial was headed: "Tout est foutu—Quoi? Tout un monde".

The alternative he proposed was *Genève ou Moscou* (1928). He saw little hope in the latter. The revivifying revolution should be carried out by the declining but still dominant capitalists, who had to replace patries in dissolution by (re) building a Europe "menaced by the capitalist imperialism of America and the socialist imperialism of Russia". There were complaints for the author, but no effects from the book. France pursued its slide to perdition, its regime "immobile, inert... shrivelled".

Hope after hope deceived, Drieu's rage mounted. Swelling shame over France's stance and her declining standards, wounding despair about her leaders' capacity to resolve problems exacerbated by their failures and by the system's failure to right itself, drove him to extremes. He drew closer to fascism. He had broken with the Surrealists in 1925 because, he said, they had come to believe in politics and he did not. It may be that he broke because he was fed up with André Breton, on whom he took savage revenge in *Gilles*; or with his close friend, Aragon; or Aragon with him. Andreu and Grover hazard a guess about the sudden rift with Aragon, who did not admire Drieu as much as Drieu admired him, or who resented Drieu's casual success with women when he, Aragon, could not achieve a proper erection. This is mere surmise, although it would appear that, like the Ligneuls of *Revue bourgeoise*, the tenors of surrealism and Drieu himself were of the "for whom public quarrels offer a decent occasion to discharge the reserves of venom accumulated against particular persons". At any rate, within a few years, Drieu would find politics the only recourse. "If I don't become socialist or fascist I'll die," he wrote to Victor Ocampo. He lived and, in a play, *Le Chef*, performed for five nights in 1934, he voiced the sempiternal fascist hope: "We don't know what we're going to do, but we're going to do something. We shall know who we are, when we see what we've done."

That would take some time. Invited to the Nuremberg Congress in 1935, Drieu found in Nazism the harness dynamism he wished for France and in Dachau, which he was taken to see, "admirable comfort and frank severity". As for the French, he thought they would recognize their leader in Jacques Doriot, the communist founder of the Parti Populaire Français, which Drieu joined and for which he wrote assiduously, along with his friend Bertrand de Jouvenal, with Alfred Fabre-Luce, and assorted lesser lights. Apparently inconsistent, his goal remained the same: eventual European union and, on the way, national renewal through "fascist socialism" (later, "national communism"). "The only hope for peace is that France should have a state, a government. It's also in war the only hope of success." But the

PPF waned with the Popular Front and with the fears a left-wing government had aroused; Drieu abandoned it; and national renewal grew ever more unlikely. Drieu's private and professional disillusion fed his political choler. His books never turned out as good as his friends expected or he himself had hoped. His women always felt "that it would be unforgettable next time". He himself was coming to share the impotence that he denounced around him. Little wonder that, in 1940, defeat suggested bitter satisfactions: "I should like to see the faces of the NRF, at the *Figaro*, of the *radicaux*, of the *jeunesses*, of everything that humiliated and wounded me."

The faces he saw were, rather, those of his old friend, Otto Abetz, of the occupying Germans, and of the collaborating Paris *beau monde*. In June 1940, as France capitulated, he had exulted that "the NRF will crawl at my feet. That heap of Jews, of pedants, of timid surrealists..." The NRF did. Both Desanti and Andreu/Grover chronicle the *volée hésitation* of those invited to contribute, or join the editorial board. "Gide, Valéry, Claudel, Claudel (who only stayed out because 'that stunk' Montier-lant was in)..." Both show that Drieu's thirty-one-month directorship had nothing to do with opportunism and much with naive fantasies of intercession between the Germans he admired and the French whom he wished were more like them. In the process, however, and in the many writings he published during these years, Drieu spit his bile not only on those whom he despised, not only on the Jews whom—having denounced racism in the 1920s—he had come to loathe in the 1930s, but on the Germans who soon proved insufficiently revolutionary.

Pierre du Bois finds his wartime homilies sententious and moralizing. They are also desperate attempts to convince himself (and begin to think that others matter less and less) that love of France and love of Europe, capitalism and socialism, realism and fantasy can be reconciled. This did not hold water, and Drieu was forced to admit to the privacy of his journal: "I don't believe in fascism anymore. Too little socialism in fascism". But, even as he moved toward that realization, his accident-prone sense of noblesse oblige led him to the most conspicuous possible commitment to collaboration. On November 7, 1942, he pledged renewed allegiance to Doriot in the *Knighthood of a mass meeting*. That night the Allies landed in North Africa. "So I'm done, Germany is done," he noted in his journal: "Les Allemands sont des cons, moi aussi... Je ne veux que mourir avec eux. Je suis d'une race et non d'une nation. La race des cons?"

In Gilles, Drieu had denounced the hero (himself) as a spoilt child and as a fine example of the sentimentality, half-idle, bourgeois

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## commentary

### Freedom to publish

By George Theiner

When the *TLS* disappeared for a year, its deprived readers suddenly found three new literary magazines on the newsstands. The *TLS* is back with us as thriving as ever, and the three newcomers are doing well, too. Most British readers would find it hard to imagine a situation in which all the literary journals in a country went out of existence at a stroke, to be replaced a year or so later by a dull, conformist magazine which abjectly toes the line laid down by the authorities of a dismal one-party state under foreign occupation.

That is what happened to *Literární listy*, *Hlas do domů*, *Tudr* and a host of other fine magazines in Czechoslovakia following the 1968 Soviet invasion. Today, it is as if they never existed. Yet human ingenuity and courage will not leave it alone. Over the past few years a number of magazines and journals have sprung up in the land of John Huss and Comenius, of T. G. Masaryk and Karel Čapek, produced under unimaginably difficult conditions by people who know they risk harassment and imprisonment. Beautifully typed and even illustrated, they pass from hand to hand in a few copies, as do whole novels, collections of short stories, books of poetry and of literary criticism, all of them put together by what one Czech has dubbed the "pre-Gutenberg" method of book production. The best known of the magazines is called *Spektrum*, the largest series of books, "Padlock Publications".

Some of these books and magazines come from Czechoslovakia, were shown to the participants of the twenty-first congress of the International Publishers' Association held in Stockholm at the end of May, whose theme was "Freedom to Publish". In a report prepared for the congress by the London-based Writers' and Scholars' Educational Trust, Peter Calvocoressi investigates the obstacles to publishing-freedom throughout the

world, with particular reference to the forty-two countries which are members of the IPA. He has found that "outside the world's avowed ideological and military autocracies, freedom to publish is widespread but vulnerable".

The situation in totalitarian or authoritarian states such as the Soviet Union, South Africa, Mozambique and Czechoslovakia was the main topic of a discussion held on the last day of the congress. Per Wästerberg, editor of the Stockholm daily *Dagens Nyheter* and president of the International PEN Club, spoke of the conflict between writers and rulers. "The writer says the emperor is naked," he said. "The politician can do one of two things: put the censored writer in a dark prison cell or go home and put on some clothes." The Franco regime killed García Lorca, yet today, Franco is dead but Lorca lives.

The Portuguese publisher, Francisco Lyon Castro criticized the governments of Portugal's former colonies Angola and Mozambique,

where there is less publishing-freedom today than before liberation. And he accused the Soviet Union of provocation at last year's Moscow Book Fair, when the authorities banned over forty books from the United States and Britain as well as some Swedish titles. The books which could not be exhibited included *Animal Farm*, a biography of Bukharin, and works by Solzhenitsyn, Sakharov, Stalin's daughter Svetlana and the Israeli Premier Menachem Begin. The French Publishers' Association has urged IPA members to refuse to take part in future book fairs in Moscow unless they are free to exhibit without censorship.

A letter from the persecuted Czech writer Ludvík Vaculík was read by his compatriot Professor František Janouch, a medical physician who emigrated in 1974 and now lives in Stockholm. Referring to a decision taken at an IPA conference last October making him an honorary member in recognition of his courage in running Padlock Publications, Vaculík explained that what he and his friends in Prague

are officially doing is not publishing but "the spontaneous creation of literary works" - "acting as publishers would which is an illegal activity and land them in jail."

Padlock Publications, started by Vaculík in 1973 and today numbering some 200 titles, provides an opportunity for at least some people in Czechoslovakia to read the banned works of the country's finest authors, such as the retired, seventy-nine-year-old poet Jaroslav Seifert, the novelist Alexander Klement, Jiří Gruša and Ivan Klíma, the literary historian Václav Černý, the essayist and poet Jan Vladimír, and Vaculík himself.

"We miss out an executive committee or editorial office, nor yet any means of production," Ludvík Vaculík wrote in his letter to the congress. "A writer who is not allowed to publish, yet wishes to have his work known, has it typed in a number of copies, signing each as a manuscript. The number of copies varies - there are usually at least ten and no one knows the maximum. A collection of poems by the National Artist Jaroslav Seifert had appeared in some 200 copies before the State, two years later, acknowledged it and had it printed. That, indeed, is the situation: to bring to public notice works which would otherwise, because of the authorities' disapproval of their authors, remain 'under padlock'."

Literature, Vaculík says, is indivisible, and no one has the right to exclude anyone from it. "Our friends abroad frequently ask us how best they can help us. The answer is simple - by seeking out and publishing good Czechoslovak literary works, whether produced in a printing house or merely on a typewriter. Whenever you come across a Czech or Slovak book typed on inferior quality paper and signed by its author, please consider it an 'honorary' publication in the case of your resolution of 13 October 1975."

At the final session of the congress it was unanimously agreed to recommend that the IPA International Committee present the first Padlock Award - named after a leading Swedish publisher who is the IPA's outgoing president - to Padlock Publications. The congress also commended the unofficial Polish publishing house NOWA and its recently imprisoned head, who is the IPA's outgoing president - to Padlock Publications. The congress also commended the unofficial Polish publishing house NOWA and its recently imprisoned head, who is the IPA's outgoing president - to Padlock Publications. The congress also commended the unofficial Polish publishing house NOWA and its recently imprisoned head, who is the IPA's outgoing president - to Padlock Publications.

Freedom to Publish, by Peter Calvocoressi, 112pp, is obtainable from Index on Censorship, 21 Finsbury Lane WC2B 5HP at 135p.



From the cover of the Viennese miniature (31x2 inches) Kleiner Sack-Kalender for 1808: one of the exhibits at the Antiquarian Book Fair (see cover).

### Standing out from the crowd

By Richard Proudfoot

Julius Caesar  
Riverside Studios

As the house lights dim, the men of the cast, nine in all, unfold a large wooden floor. It suggests an indoor gymnasium - later a football field - with Cinn's poet for ball - but it affords an acting area of Elliptical dimensions. Fourteen actors clad in barely-differentiated shades of grey share all but the leading roles, emerging from the mob with a sword, a staff or a letter to identify them in the named parts. (The four leading men and the two women do not double.)

But Peter Gill's production of *Julius Caesar* is in no way Elizabethan; depending rather on well-defined ensemble playing for its success. Extraneous to the play's function, are needed to furnish the expanses of the stage, while the uniformity of costume which added potent anonymity to plebeians and conspirators begins merely to confuse the audience's eye. The play's multiple and painful ironies begin to shine. David Horvich's Caesar displays a particular contempt for the plebs, except when they are enemy. Calpurnia, Anthony and Cassius are

throws down the flattering letter which urges him to awake, only to be drawn back to it with a guilty fascination, sharpened later as he hides it from Portia behind his back.

To strident oriental organ music, Caesar is carried shoulder-high through the streets to the Capitol. The murder, which is the play's fulcrum, is stylized by slow playing, by the flooding of intense white light on the reeling figure of Caesar and by a chilling escape of hissing smoke, white blending to red, from the roof. Caesar dies in defeated acceptance of Brutus's verdict. After the murder, Brutus in turn is raised shoulder-high on a section of platform to deliver his oration with passionate intensity to an audience so unconcerned with liberty as to shock him with the cry "Let him be Caesar". Anthony begins his funeral speech from the same "practised platform", but the mob, his balance in their control, their threatening faces ringed about his feet, John Price's performance as Anthony derives much of its power from so urgent a confrontation with his audience, the over-familiar lines purged of cliché by the sheer need to keep control of a dangerous situation.

After the interval, the limitations of the production become more apparent. Extraneous to the play's function, are needed to furnish the expanses of the stage, while the uniformity of costume which added potent anonymity to plebeians and conspirators begins merely to confuse the audience's eye. The play's multiple and painful ironies begin to shine. David Horvich's Caesar displays a particular contempt for the plebs, except when they are enemy. Calpurnia, Anthony and Cassius are

to alternating petulance and buffoonery. Early in the play, Michael Byrne's Cassius derives energy from envy of Caesar and from the compulsion of a may storm, but nowhere suggests what qualities might motivate Brutus's loving confidence in him. This lack reduces their quarrel to a hollow shouting-match, touched with feeling only in the report of Brutus's death (testimony to the power of Lindsay Duncan's performance).

It is left to John Shrapnell's Brutus to carry the play through to its conclusion. The strength of his performance lies in its simplicity. He is the humanist's predicament: how is the philosopher to engage in the political world? But Shrapnell saw it also as a personal predicament: how to reconcile the love of freedom with the love of a friend. Samuel Johnson observed of Shakespeare that "His story requires Romans or kings, but he thinks only on men". From this production Brutus alone emerges as a man of any interest, a virtuous idealist.

The ending reflects a desire to limit the play's concerns to the political. For Shakespeare's emphasis on the death of Roman virtue in Brutus, Gill substitutes the vision of Octavius lit in red, brandishing the sword which killed both Julius Caesar and Brutus; to the sound of off-stage voices shouting "Caesar". This production charts the failure of conspiracy too much in terms of the machinations of the second triumvirate, thus reducing the impact of the inter-acts and under-estimating the play's analysis of the inevitable self-destructiveness of emotional treachery in Brutus. The short-sighted political maneuvering into a final tactical move, the plot to assassinate Caesar, to

### Awf centre

By Gabriele Annan

Nancy Mitford. A Portrait by Her Sisters.  
BBC TV

This is not so much a portrait as a gallery of self-portraits. In her programme on English gardens, Candida Lycett-Green got her human subjects to reveal themselves by talking about something very near to their hearts. Without visually help, the novelists Alexander Klement, Jiří Gruša and Ivan Klíma, the literary historian Václav Černý, the essayist and poet Jan Vladimír, and Vaculík himself.

"We miss out an executive committee or editorial office, nor yet any means of production," Ludvík Vaculík wrote in his letter to the congress. "A writer who is not allowed to publish, yet wishes to have his work known, has it typed in a number of copies, signing each as a manuscript. The number of copies varies - there are usually at least ten and no one knows the maximum. A collection of poems by the National Artist Jaroslav Seifert had appeared in some 200 copies before the State, two years later, acknowledged it and had it printed. That, indeed, is the situation: to bring to public notice works which would otherwise, because of the authorities' disapproval of their authors, remain 'under padlock'."

Literature, Vaculík says, is indivisible, and no one has the right to exclude anyone from it. "Our friends abroad frequently ask us how best they can help us. The answer is simple - by seeking out and publishing good Czechoslovak literary works, whether produced in a printing house or merely on a typewriter. Whenever you come across a Czech or Slovak book typed on inferior quality paper and signed by its author, please consider it an 'honorary' publication in the case of your resolution of 13 October 1975."

At the final session of the congress it was unanimously agreed to recommend that the IPA International Committee present the first Padlock Award - named after a leading Swedish publisher who is the IPA's outgoing president - to Padlock Publications. The congress also commended the unofficial Polish publishing house NOWA and its recently imprisoned head, who is the IPA's outgoing president - to Padlock Publications. The congress also commended the unofficial Polish publishing house NOWA and its recently imprisoned head, who is the IPA's outgoing president - to Padlock Publications.

Freedom to Publish, by Peter Calvocoressi, 112pp, is obtainable from Index on Censorship, 21 Finsbury Lane WC2B 5HP at 135p.

Perhaps this departmental open-mindedness helps to explain why last week's meeting was so warm-hearted and stimulating. Just as Fraser himself would have liked.

her husband against the charge of anti-semitism. Even if this particular can of worms is not past its shelf-life, it is irrelevant here.

In the Mitford Sisters Show all the surviving ones have equally far parts: Pam (Mrs Jackson), Diana (Lady Mosley), Decca (Mrs Robert Traubner), and Debu (the Duchess of Devonshire). Nancy herself, in a ghostly black and white from a film shot in 1966, makes slightly fewer appearances. There are two supporting players: Jonathan Guinness, who reads brilliantly from his aunt's works, and Gaston Palewski, the third great affair of Nancy's heart: the charm of this elderly French gentleman is devastating.

The sisters themselves, if you are looking for the characters from Nancy's novels (and from her biographies), because there are Mitfordes in fancy dress all over the place, are unexpectedly short on charm, except for Nancy herself. But they all have loads of personality. Talk is what the Mitfords are all about, and Julian Jebb has had the courage to shoot them straight,

### George Fraser

By John Willett

Standing flat against the side walls of a Leicester University lecture theatre, or sitting alertly at long desks incised with such sturdy thoughts as "Shaw is no life in French literature" and even "Leatherhead Champions", a full house of the late George Fraser's friends of all ages gathered from various directions last week to listen and reflect in his memory. Fraser, who died last January and had taught English at Leicester throughout the 1960s and 1970s, was for many years the chief poetry critic of the *TLS*: a man of high standards yet kindly sympathies, a large shambling colonial body with a thin tough scale literary character lurking inside.

The tribute paid him that night was in the coin he knew best, and most about: words. Words recorded by five key modern poets: Yeats, Eliot, Pound, Auden (though Auden's voice was eventually sacrificed to the imperative pressures of Closing Time) and Hughes; reading their own poems in a style that ranged from Pound's personal incantation to Hughes's throwaway obliqueness, while all emphasizing structure as actors so often fail to do. Words from Fraser's essays on these men, and his comments on Pound's lack of common sense or Eliot's provision of "new sharp tools" for the poets who were to come after, words in Fraser's own voice.

recording a poem written on a troupe in the 1940s or the moving "For my Wife on her First Birthday" (which it was hard not to applaud).

Non-electronic words, too, from two eminent friends and academic colleagues, Empson himself and Richard Hoggart. What seemed so fresh and personal in their short talks was, first of all, Sir William's very real (if only intermittently audible) respect for Fraser's poems, which he praised for their ruthless self-examination and their ability to sustain long rhythms without any "poetic" affectation; along with his regard, based on his own experience, that university teachers had perhaps stopped Fraser from writing more of them. (It is good news that a collected edition is being prepared.)

Then Dr Hoggart followed by reciting his own first meeting with Fraser, who interrupted packing his luggage for Japan in order to discuss this unknown young teacher's proposed book on Auden. From that point on he became one of Hoggart's "benchmarks": those figures, live or dead, whom one imagines observing and judging whatever one does. Both men found themselves going in for the same lecturership at Leicester. In the late 1950s, when Fraser was appointed - a poet and journalist in his forties with no academic position - a gamble. Hoggart, in his way just as unorthodox a candidate, then applied for the next vacancy, and Fraser urged his appointment. "For an Historiographer, discourse of affairs orderly as they were done... but a Port thrusteth into the middle, even where it most concerneth him, and there recurring to the things forepast, and divining of things to come, maketh a pleasing Analysis of all". It's very intertextual, too, this epic - particularly this epic's - middest. Hot bits of what is now remembered as Episode IV (more familiar to us as Part One) are deftly recycled: the stunning noise of the weaponry, the veridically animated rush of war-ringing spacecraft, Han Solo's old banter of a space craft, the terrifying life-support-machine sound of Vader's wheezing, the painful anticipation of feeling submerged private parts (the earlier swamp scene becomes a swamp episode), even Alec Guinness's Ben Kenobi (too rarely killed off last time, before the modish accountant realized). At the end, more promisingly, but lines are opened into Episode VI than are on view in a gutted telephone junction box.

Other wars, too, other films, get heavily alluded to. The fight between Luke's lot and Vader's on snowy Hoth is full of Stalingrad. Alistair Maclean/Red-over Desert Rats images: Vader's troops have become more pronouncedly European types, running a Starg Luft, dropped by the jets of the USAF. The funding and organization of the scheme itself have yet to be decided.

head-on, in interview or reading her sister Diana (then in jail under Regulation 18B), "your access irritates people so much they'd like to put you on the fire". To Diana the voice was "a private sorrow"; Debu said it sounded ridiculous, "even sillier if you live in the north as I do".

Yet one cannot help feeling they never really wanted to change it. After all, people who learned to lip "awf" in the nursery have mostly switched to "off" by now, even if they deplore their children's unposh accents (mercifully, the programme steered clear of U and Non-U). The Mitfords seem defiantly themselves, voice and all, ashamed of nothing and pleased with their non-conformity. They like to *épater the bien pensants*. The Duchess, for instance, does not believe in education: "Once you've learned to read, you do the rest yourself." Not that she likes reading. "I hate (pause) while she searches for the elusive, exoteric word books." Nancy gaily told her interviewer how much she had enjoyed the war. "Everyone was in a very good temper."

But the voice is really a real horror. What makes Mitfordese special is the choice of words and the way they are assembled. Asked what Unity felt about her country going to war while she was with Hitler in Germany, Nancy replied: "Well, she tried to do it herself. You can't do more - really. And about her own faith: 'I believe in God, in a besotted kind of way.' She saw the afterlife as a heavenly park with pretty cottages for all her friends. The *Lost Chord* perpetually playing and the occasional nightingale." At this point, and to these sounds, the family photographs with the lovely children came on again. "Nothing," Nancy wrote, "is so poignantly sad as old family photographs." Julian Jebb has made the elegiac most of them so that his whole film becomes a general lament on lost gaiety and innocence.

She is the slow, dreamy, faintly goofy one; Decca is brisk, Lady Mosley regal, the Duchess dour. Nancy bright, bird-like, sharp, and amused. They all have the Mitford voice, but in different tempi: *audante - penseroso, alla marcía, maestoso, con forza, allegro con brio*. Even forty years ago, the voice was thought to be a disaster: Nancy's chief in the fire service asked her to drop her lectures to

### The mighty Vader's helm

By Valentine Cunningham

The Empire Strikes Back  
Odeon, Leicester Square

I thought - you thought - this was Episode II, but it turns out that *The Empire Strikes Back* is actually Episode V. We're far more deeply in media res than we'd supposed. Not least mums and dads: thoroughly plunged into what looks like a long term commitment to the Star Wars saga. It's a very epic, very Spenserian place to begin, of course. For an Historiographer, discourse of affairs orderly as they were done... but a Port thrusteth into the middle, even where it most concerneth him, and there recurring to the things forepast, and divining of things to come, maketh a pleasing Analysis of all". It's very intertextual, too, this epic - particularly this epic's - middest. Hot bits of what is now remembered as Episode IV (more familiar to us as Part One) are deftly recycled: the stunning noise of the weaponry, the veridically animated rush of war-ringing spacecraft, Han Solo's old banter of a space craft, the terrifying life-support-machine sound of Vader's wheezing, the painful anticipation of feeling submerged private parts (the earlier swamp scene becomes a swamp episode), even Alec Guinness's Ben Kenobi (too rarely killed off last time, before the modish accountant realized). At the end, more promisingly, but lines are opened into Episode VI than are on view in a gutted telephone junction box.

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new recruits because, she quoted in her sister Diana (then in jail under Regulation 18B), "your access irritates people so much they'd like to put you on the fire". To Diana the voice was "a private sorrow"; Debu said it sounded ridiculous, "even sillier if you live in the north as I do".

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bomber heroically hedgehopping against the odds home. Other texts you clearly need, to get this conflict with Hitlerized evil placed right: in particular you need the Official Poster Monthly (50p a time) for details of names and places the actual movie text will not give you.

So what's new? Affirmative action in casting has come up with Hispanic type Lando Calrissian, dubious playboy chum of Solo and master of the City of Clouds, forced to help Vader get his hands on Luke. And Darth Vader's head, curiously phallic, raven a delirious red veins - is glimpsed as his helmet is lowered onto it. It cannot be said that the film's theology is as new or as exciting: it is the familiar west-coast irrationalism still swathed in glossolalic gurgles from R.2-D and growls and howls from Chewbacca. But now there is much more of this pop Tolkienism. "Unlearn what you have learned", Luke is advised, preparing to do Ben's kind of work. "I don't believe it," he gasps at one of the Jedi Master's tricks. "That" - opines this long-haired hairy Hobbit with his joke Chinese waiter's twinkle, "is why you fail." A gnomish gnome.

Not that technology is ever really threatened by this simple mindlessness, which remains a handy machine-age faith for the more affluent of hermits. Still, the loss of goodness now comes slightly more complicated by Luke's new Calvinism for Secret Sharers, his apprehension that even clean blond herms have a dark side (the helmet of Vader, struck off by Luke's own light sabre, is inhabited by Luke's own face): a cunning preparation for the story's latest eddial turn. At the end of this episode the Lord Darth Vader tempts Luke with the revelation that he is his father. Gasp, So, ye are of your father the devil? Not to worry, though our cine-mystagogues have doubtless already got some smoothly un-discovering way, found even, this faster.

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### The Movement

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Fiction of the 1950s

Blake Morrison

'Well-written and well-researched study. He carefully sifts out the truth, half-truth, and falsehood in the various hazy notions that have been current about this group of writers... a reviewer of the same generation as the Movement must salute the inwardness with which Morrison has recaptured that receding era.' W. W. Robson in *The Guardian*. £8.50

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Andrew Causey

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**By Pat Rogers**

What is needed, surely, is some-

distinct from that of most literary communication. It is surprising that the message gets through at all; and of course in a sadly large range of cases it does not. Scholarly articles on literature are, one presumes, more assiduously read than those in specialist branches of knowledge. Much time is sold, the average readership per article can fall to less than unity. There are two reasons why this should not hold in the arts: firstly, specialism has not yet become so refined that we need speak only to 0.87 of a reader; secondly, researchers in medicine have a special interest in setting up experiments, weighing samples, perhaps even looking at the human body, but reading is our whole business.

The conclusion to be drawn from all this might be that a special system of signs would be likely to emerge, by which either ad transaction or ad reception is more easily negotiated. This author is to some puzzling extent, less an author in a journal. Periodical articles have to communicate in the place and in the manner prescribed, and their semi-anonymity must be something to do with the "set" of the journal itself.

Good housekeeping and pure financial control remain vital to the success of a journal, *where its standing academically.*

Some of the other periodicals the field have moved away from the original socialist and embrace a wider audience. *Studies in Burke and his Time* became *The Eighteenth Century*. *Theory and Interpretation*, which approached all aspects of the eighteenth century, was

the prime concern. The *Sophistician*, at first confined to the Pope-Swift circle, has gradually taken on board Dryden, the Eos luminaries (and, by some degree, contemporaries such as Henry all Bolingbroke), the early eighteenth century, and philosophes. A comparatively Augustan period. *A comparatively* journal is *Eighteenth Century Life*: the slant expressed in its title tends to mean social and cultural history, approached through biographies rather than the other way around. I have excluded from this list the

yearbooks and occasional special issues (such as *South-Central*, *Frontiers*, and *Frontiers in Literature and the Eighteenth Century*; since they belong in form to the other class of literature than that of the "periodical," as defined earlier.

Critics in library funding may know that some of the top periodicals will go to the wall; but the best will survive even in hard times. I am prepared to bet that the best *PMLA* will prosper among the Modern Language Association of the Modern Languages in a law of its own making in the days to come. I am sure that in a few years old. (I write with almost malice or rancor: *PMLA* is almost unique in the journal world in never having rejected an article of mine; it is also unique in describing the tedious in a way associated with the journal in some terms.) Its approach seems to me preferable to the louche attitude of *Frontiers*; sometimes afflicts *Chicago Inquiry*—but that work is outside the present frame of reference.) Periodicals can be good to learn from, good to talk through—they serve learned men to colleagues more learned than oneself in terms of competence and even in terms of equanimity. They can do much else, thanks.

No, one could hope, in an article of this size, to make a complete survey of current American academic periodicals. Even in moderately well-equipped universities there is likely to be a damnable display, though a few publications will recognize functional and established styles, make immediate claims on the attention of the best in transatlantic criticism. The *New York Review of Books*, with its grand international establishment contributors, is often the most distinguished venue for English journalism. English Americanists look mainly to four leading academic periodicals: the *English Journal* of *American Studies*, edited by Howard Temperley, and Arnold Goldman; the "profession" house of *Journal of the American Linguistics Association*; *America* (*PMLA*); and two quarters in American Literature, published by Duke University, and *American Quarterly*, the organ of the American Studies Association, which comes in for the interlocking review study in *American*.

**TO** (*Theatre Quarterly*) is about to enter its tenth year and in the latest issue (Volume 9, Number 3) three members of its editorial board announce "New Contents for Contents for the Eighties," interesting in particular in the proposals for new critical affiliations, uncertainties and aesthetic experimentation are discussed. The magazine has a special interest in political problems and in this issue follows up on articles by Dwight Brown and John McGrath with a parable about Gooch with "Crested Greys" and "engineers".

Michele Wandor on "Socialistics and the Structure of Socialist Theatre". The magazine is available from 40 Marston Street, London W1 at £8.50 annually or £4.50 plus £4.50 for institutions.

colleagues' reception of their books, registered a more or less vertiginous sense of having been mistaken for somebody else, absorbed into a process which "pretends to be public discourse while it is really little more than self-fertilisation" (Booth).

The other name for this, of course, is "pluralism". *Novel does* at least talk about it, or did, but many journals practise it in noisy silence. *Contemporary Literature*, for example, set extraordinarily contradictory and accommodating agendas, ranging from to vapid internationalism and ominous pieces on Malcolm Lowry and John Gardner (what is it about Grendel?), but producing good special issues from time to time, and a few excellent critical discussions and criticism in Fall 1978.

Reading through bound issues (an unnatural activity, better to Xerox your irenical and run) you move distractedly from (say) Christine Brooke-Rose to finding a splendid link on Genette to a meretricious fiction 1974-76 which reads like this:

... these new forms of worship  
gather correspondences from  
every known faith—including  
science—and gleefully, tem-  
perately synthesize them into a  
poorly mysterious sense of a spiritual  
universe.  
Reincarnation is back. And people  
are serious about it.

*Critique*, devoted entirely to fic-  
tion, is trendier and even brasher  
("The high incidence of funerals in  
Crews's fiction, violent deaths often  
preceding, suggests two of his pri-  
ncipal thematic concerns, love and  
its destructive power") and inno-  
cent of -isms. *Grendel* unwilted, a  
it were, on shiny paper, with lush  
straight unjustified type, and lots  
of slugs.

Here one enters the morass Gerald Graff feared in the clever *Tri-Quarterly* in 1973: "... pluralism usefully rationalises the attitudes which elevate quantitative 'production' of books, articles, and bibliographies. . . . Almost any scholarly project, critical approach, textual interpretation qualifies as valid, hence publishable, hence useable in the quest for advancement, so long

as a minimal degree of technical competence is attained." *TriQuarterly* doesn't avoid pluralism, but tempers it with this sort of fastidious unguish, until you're almost persuaded, paradoxically, that it's a good thing.

As you are (with light years of difference) in *Science and Fiction*, Strassman, in *Criticism and Controversy*, but also like are urgent to encounter the hardest of contemporary critical problems, and as a result are busily exposing current softness. "Our pluralism," say the editors, "... will be in most cases defined by the absence of . . . or encompassing critical approach . . . every supercritical and ahistorical . . . compartmentalizing—be it hyper-formalist, archetypal, impressionistic or 'ideological'—will finally expose my myself to the inadequate." What they're growing, in muscling in on respectability, is just how unrespectable much fiction-criticism is. And if some of their methodological Grand-rules are unexcusing

we must identify the relation between the elements of the text and the larger set of elements from which the textual ones have been selected (e.g. the relation of a blue sun to all other stars)—their examples us here provide pleasingly casual shocks.

The journals that concentrate on fiction do seem afflicted with bafflement, which is not the same as their quality question issue, though (viewed from the outside) they are. "Thus," they perceive, "that amidst the time-honoured melange of English Literary History ("ELH"), articles on the novel look more comfortable and sound less anxious. Michael Masson, for example, writing of *Utopias* (comparative cuckooing, of course), considers that there be between pieces on Pater and *The Testament of Cressida*, seemed more lexically learned and confident he'd be read. Kentucky Romance Quarterly can accommodate a good essay on Borges titled "Pierre Menard et Where is the Text?" (by a nameless contributor), with a somewhat pastoral and Voltaire, in a close printed workmanlike context: the for the -moment, makes the

"approaches" business look simply like common sense.

[illegible]

old formalism, which gets referred to distantly as an influence though "encourages us to discuss the verbal and historical shaping of literary texts" (1977, 1978, 1979). He is allergic to the idea only for speechless and timeless "artifacts" (Peter Hughes, VII, 1977), but its writers nevertheless often seem self-dramatizingly anxious about the "new indeterminacy." Imb Hassan (in the same volume) is more direct: "The new post-structuralist discourse is a new set of more ambitious quarrels and wars will hear the post-structuralist discourse . . . signs dissolving perpetually into other signs, a metaphysics of absence (based on the disappearance of the full subject), a metaphysics of fracture, a system of wavering and slipping between science and symbolism—in short, a brilliant unmaking of the modernist mind" (XII). His own chosen style of discourse (wryly charismatic, full of gaps, with pre- and post-textual confusions the point by paradox) is *Dilettus* rite.

*Nineteenth-Century Fiction*, more surgically, rather confirms the prestige of (structuralist) theories and the delinquencies of historicism. Their special issue on "Narrative

Findings" (Volume 37, Number 1, June 1978) saw J. Hillis Miller discreetly bathing in the "undecidable" "solve, dissolve, resolve," says Alexander Legg, who is thus quoting Thomas Henry Buckle, our history ("All the events which surround us...are but different parts of a single scheme, which is permeated by one glorious principle of universality and uniformity") not just as though Buckle belongs to a lost past, but as though he's a fragment from Atlantic Dickens, here in the same volume in a splendidly titled piece by Alistair M. Duckworth becomes a "bricoleur," and Florio-Ruane Flinchin "a tissue of quotations, a space where 'writings' converge." In the end, Ronald Hoar's Canadian review of some poor information that writes on Dickens is "a context thick with reference to other critics," says meadly, "but the clarity and analytical and critical debate: the temple of learning is rising, brick by brick."

Or to put it another way, "one of the great growth-individualities." I come full circle here, but just to show I've learnt something about pluralism, I'll put up with a little pluralism (No 384, Vol 74, Part 1, 1978) but a marvelously deconstructed piece by Philip Collins on Dickens's rehearsal desk and what his gamine thought ("The more you want of him, the more you want to lose him"), as well as a report on the Dickens Week in Boulogne-sur-Mer. I can't pretend that the fiction journals in bulk are any rather dismaying, but there are good things in them, and I'll mention things in them. To cite two, I haven't mentioned: an essay by Charles Baxter in *Novel*, 11, 1977-78 on Lowry ("The Consul", in this sense, the first author in the novel to be a fully existing character in authenticity"); and a piece by Dick Penner (*Critique*, Vol 20, No 3) on Nabokov's Cincinnati. C. who is, coincidentally, to executed for a ghostly surprise ending of a feature we have known (thanks to this feature Brooklyn, Rose) that this particular class crime is called "metanovel".

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By Lorna Sage

colleagues' reception of their books, registered a more or less vertiginous sense of having been mistaken for somebody else, absorbed into a process which "pretends to be public discourse while it is really little more than self-fertilisation" (Booth).

The other name for this, of course, is "pluralism". *Novel does* at least talk about it, or did, but many journals practise it in noisy silence. *Contemporary Literature*, for example, set extraordinarily contradictory and accommodating agendas, ranging from to vapid internationalism and ominous pieces on Malcolm Lowry and John Gardner (what is it about Grendel?), but producing good special issues from time to time, and a few excellent critical discussions and criticism in Fall 1978.

Reading through bound issues (an unnatural activity, better to Xerox your irenical and run) you move distractedly from (say) Christine Brooke-Rose to a splendid long piece on Genette to a meretricious fiction 1974-76 which reads like this:

... these new forms of worshiping gather correspondences from every known faith—including science—and gleefully, temporarily synthesize them into a new, mysterious sense of a spiritual touched universe. Reincarnation is back, and people are serious about it.

*Critique*, devoted entirely to fiction, is trendier and even brasher ("The high incidence of funerals in *Crow's* fiction, violent deaths often preceding, suggests two of his principal thematic concerns, love and death, its destructive power, and immortality," *Critique* unblinkingly admitted, it were, on shiny paper, with just slightly unjustified type, and lots of checkmarks).

Here one enters the morass Gerald Gruff found in the *morass Tri-Quarterly* in 1973: "... pluralism usually rationalises the attitudes which cleaves quantitative 'production' of books, articles, and bibliographies. ... Almost any scholarly project, critical approach, textual edition, or other qualification is valid, hence publishable, hence usable to the quest for advancement, so long

as a minimal degree of technical competence is attained." *TriQuarterly* doesn't avoid pluralism, but tempers it with this sort of fastidious unguish, until you're almost persuaded, paradoxically, that it's a good thing.

As you are (with light years of difference) in *Science and Fiction*, Strassman, in *Criticism and Controversy*, but also like are urgent to encounter the hardest of contemporary critical problems, and as a result are busily exposing current softness. "Our pluralism," say the editors, "... will be in most cases defined by the absence of . . . or encompassing critical approach . . . every supercritical and ahistorical . . . compartmentalizing—be it hyper-formalist, archetypal, impressionistic or 'ideological'—will finally expose my myself to the inadequate." What they're growing, in muscling in on respectability, is just how unrespectable much fiction-criticism is. And if some of their methodological Grund-rislos are unexcusing

we must identify the relation between the elements of the text and the larger set of elements from which the textual ones have been selected (e.g. the relation of a blue sun to all other stars)—their examples us here provide pleasingly casual shocks.

The journals that concentrate on fiction do seem afflicted with basic faith, which is not the same as their quality question issue, though (viewed from the outside) they are. Thus, "Tuesdays, for instance, that amidst the time-honoured melange of English Literary History ("ELH"), articles on the novel look more comfortable and sound less anxious. Michael Masson, for example, writing of *Utopias* (comparative cuckooing, or, considering the title, the difference between pieces on Pater and *The Testament of Cressida*, seemed more lexically learned and confident he'd be read. Kentucky Romance Quarterly can accommodate a good essay on Borges titled "Pierre Menard et Where is the Text?" (by a nameless contributor), with a somewhat pastoral and Voltaire, in a close printed workmanlike context: the for the -moment, makes the

"approaches" business look simply like common sense.

One might be tempted to think it was an unreal problem, a meta-problem (the "approaches" approach?) but it's not, and academically journals and university courses that do not have a real usefulness selection and by embedding it in solid scholarship can't now help. There's only critical language that promises or threatens to work across these disciplines to bridge them. The language of structuralism. If contributors to a particular journal do seem to be sharing an idiom at all, it's highly likely that their articles will be powdered with the talismanic formulae of the reflexive, readable and un-. These are critical noises that parallel what has been happening in contemporary fiction, which according to Genette (1969, translated in *New Literary History* 11, 1), has been falling back "on the vague murmur of its own discourse".

*New Literary History* itself doesn't regret the passing of the

old formalism, which gets referred to distantly as an influence though "encourages us to discuss the verbal and historical shaping of literary texts" (1977, 1978, 1979). He is allergic to the "all too often only for speechless and timeless 'artifacts'" (Peter Hughes, VII, 1977), but its writers nevertheless often seem self-dramatizingly anxious about the "new indeterminacy." Imb Hassan (in the same volume) is more direct: "The post-structuralist discourse is a series of more or less ambitious quarrels and wars which will leave the post-structuralist discourse . . . signs dissolving perpetually into other signs, a metaphysics of absence (based on the disappearance of the full subject), a metaphysics of fracture, a system of wavering and slipping between science and symbolism—in short, a brilliant unmaking of the modernist mind" (XII). His own chosen style of discourse (wryly charismatic, full of gaps, with pre- and post-textual confusions the point by paradox) is

*Disjunctive*

*Nineteenth-Century Fiction*, more surgically, rather confirms the prestige of (structuralist) theories and the delinquencies of historical and their special issue on "Narrative

Findings" (Volume 33, Number 1, June 1978) saw J. Hillis Miller directly bathing in the "undecidable"; "solve, dissolve, resolve," and Alexander Welsh on Hughes quoting Thomas Hardy. Backle or history? ("All the events which surround us...are but different parts of a single scheme, which is permeated by one glorious principle of universal and undeviating regularity, in not just thought but nature belongs to the last but not the first though he's a fragment from Aikant. Dickens, later in the same volume, in a splendidly reluctant piece by Alistair M. Duckworth, a "bachelor" and "brother" Flinchin' a "disc of citations," space where writings connect." Later still, Rns Dabney in a sardonic review of some poor unfortunate who writes on Dickens in context, clash with reference to other critical texts, and say: "Clearly there is an on-going critical debate: the temple of learning is rising, brick by brick."

Or to put it another way: "...

one of the great growth-industries . . . I come full circle here but just to show I've learnt something about pluralism, I'll put it in the plural. I've read *Walden* (No 384 - Vol 74, Part 1, 1978) as well as a marvellously deconstructed piece by Philip Collins on Dickens's reworking of *Walden* and what his gummyness thought ("The more you want to know the master, the more you'll find him"), as well as a piece in the *London Review of Books* on Boulogne-sur-Mer. I can't pretend that the fiction journals in bulk aren't rather dismaying, but there are great many good, witty, illuminating things in them. To cite two I haven't mentioned, an essay by Catherine Nixson, "Nouveau Roman on Lower" ("The Consul" is, in my sense, the first author in literary history who is shot for existentialist inauthenticity"), and a piece by Dick Pinner (*Critique*, Vol. 10, No 3) on Nabokov's *Cynicism*. To which is, colloquially, extended to the monistic splendours of *As a result of my leafing, I even know (thanks to Christine Brook, Rose) that this particular class crime is called "metaphor".*

**By Hermione Lee**

by French critical thought), and the George Review is particularly influential. The last of these falls also into another category, of magazines devoted mainly to original works which emanate from an impressive number of universities: Northwestern University in Chicago, the *Paris Review*, etc. And this is not even to embark on the list of American journals specializing in particular English areas: figures (*Renaissance Quarterly*, *English Literary Renaissance*), studies (*The Keats-Shelley Journal*, *Dickens Studies Newsletter*, *Victorian Studies*, *Conradiana*), or the periodicals in specific fields such as Latin-American studies, linguistics and comparative literature (*The Americanist*, *The New English Quarterly*, *The William and Mary Quarterly*), or the less well-known, but often good publications from independent departments in English studies at the University of Michigan.

Even a scanty survey, however, invites transatlantic comparisons. How many English universities more specifically, English departments, are known for the journals they produce? The four American publications also have a storied presentation to poems or stories? How wide an audience do such publications reach here? The American academic journals have not had the moment of glory that the *Times Book Review* had a recent article in the *Guardian* put it as "at least several million readers" but with their fat university subsidies they do not want to have been told that they were *Kepton* books and in circulation can afford to send fifty reprints to the author of each article.

This hyperactive industry, bound to raise quality, and some literary-American academics in

stand, voicing anxiety about its own activities. Much of the agonizing is surprisingly traditional. Randall Jarrell's 1950s attack of "the age of criticism" ("It is often, an astonishingly common joyless, heartless, unvirgined, self-important, cliché-ridden, preposterously, self-absorbed, taste-obsessed, critical") still seems topical. The same problems are repeated, raised, even in the 1970s section of current issues. PMLA's editors for March 1980 complains in familiar terms of "crisis"—prospects for tenure, shortage of jobs—while celebrating the fact that 7 essays in a year are submitted to the magazine. When those essays is suggested by review of new books on Dickens' *Novel* for Spring 1979 ("Professional and institutional. Jealous and restricted job opportunities. It encourages the..."), the graph succeeds. As a morphograph succeeds morphograph, the graph for Dickens' greatness gets more exaggerated (of shrill"), and by G. K. Hunter's round-up, in the *Sewanee Review* for Winter 1980, of recent books on Elizabethan Drama, the graph reaches its peak. In Noel Aliman's *The Tudor Play of Mind*, a real book does not simply the usual application of tenure.

"Literature" is sacrificed only to the job market, but to wit the January *PMLA* calls "ghetto criticism" (women's literature must properly be written, criticized, taught by women, Jewish literature by Jews, black literature by blacks and so forth) and to what a view describes as "the quest for a philosopher's stone of American criticism" has excited "American academic criticism for the past decade." Another writer comments, "In the *Yafa Revue*, Autumn 1979, that 'contemporary

literary criticism—that is to say, to fashionable criticism, unlike that of the majority of plodding, anonymous Studies and Surveys published each year—seems obsessed with reiteration. Certain critics are repeatedly held responsible for the fashions in analysis. James E. Miller Jr. gingerly attacks Harold Bloom for being "morbidly obsessed with private possession of the one true text" in his review of *MLA's* January editorial makes a joke about accepting one essay on the basis of its "boldly unconventional approach": "It does not contain a single reference to Northrop Frye!"

In the field of American history, too, anxiety that criticism is either too spurious or fashionable or both, if not, as is accompanied by dissatisfaction with the self-perpetuating consensus about key texts. "One may study of the big five," Robert S. Lytton asks in *American Literature* (March 1979), "Whitman, Whitman, Hawthorne, and Melville? Or another book on 'The American Myth'? We have heard Myth of the Garden, of the Potomac Fall, of Regeneration through Violence." Marcus Unliffe, looking on his *Journal of American Work in English Studies*, records his response to the American Lit-

ture section: "What another source of 'My Kinsman, Major Molineux,' another monograph on 'The Scarlet Letter'?" There's some mileage to be had from Harry Levin's joke, made in 1954 that "the vast constellation of books that might be said to have taken the place of a wailing siren for the industries of New England . . . Some of the current periodicals and the most recent volumes of the American Literary Scholarship (1977): reinforce this sense of glib overkill." Only 35 books in titles, this year, dominates the

pillar of the American Literature  
 Scholarship section on Poe, "doubtless  
 from the last three or four years  
 when there were over 500 Amer-  
 ican books on Poe." The American  
 Literature has essays on dialects  
 and Huckleberry Finn, James' Preface  
 and Emily Dickinson's symbolism.  
 The books on American literature  
 published in 1978 which seem to  
 have been most influential are  
 by Alfred and Emarlin Hill, *American  
 Dunes: From Poor Richard to  
 Dunsborough*, Savvan Bercoff  
*The American Jeremiah*, Helmut  
 Nash Smith's *Democracy and  
 Novel: Popular Restoration*, and  
*Historic Book Trade* by Dennis V.  
 land's *Mark Twain in England*.  
 deal with the big names, or pur-  
 established historical ideas like  
 influence of Puritanism. Inevitably  
 some of the articles are struggling  
 historical books are struggling  
 a foothold on worn-down slopes.  
 The father-son theme in B  
 Buys is dealt with critically by  
 wudd that ostensibly seem of  
 site each other: Edwin Mich  
 and Richard Chase. The  
 relationship as Oedipal/anti-  
 pre-Oedipal; Robert Penn Warren  
 connects the father and son  
 of the theme of reconciliation. I  
 of these aspects become opera-  
 when we approach the novel  
 gradually.  
 Peter Bave and Richard P

It's unfair, of course, to take one essay as an indication of general level. The contrary can be done: *Novel for Spring 1910* is an interesting essay on the novel. It is by Kohn W. Lee of Brown University, and won money in Hemingway's fiction contest. Nancy Comley at Hartford, Conn., which maintains a high standard, has two good essays in the Spring 1980 issue, one on *The Marble Faun*.



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# Tom Disch

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For while both a constitution  
a utopia are, as the authors  
examples of "an imaginative"  
whose eventual "consequences"  
not be clearly foreseen", the

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